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Comments Regarding Bill #1134

AN ACT CREATING THE ENERGY INDEPENDENCE STRATEGY BOARD

Before the Energy and Technology Committee

March 17, 2009

Prepared by Shirley Bergert¹

This bill creates an "Energy Independence Strategy Board." There are currently over a dozen entities dealing with energy policy in CT and this risks development of disjointed policy and practice in the state. We suggest consideration be given to assigning the responsibilities for this proposed board to one of the existing entities. The Energy Conservation Management Board (CGS §16-245m) has extensive institutional knowledge of the myriad efficiency programs in Connecticut. It is responsible for extensive demand side efficiency programs, consistently rated among the top programs in the country. It is therefore, uniquely positioned to recommend funding expenditures to maximize the effectiveness of existing programs.

If the legislature decides to create a new board, it should include the ECMB.

Note that the legislation refers to the "Center for Sustainable Energy"; the correct name is the "Institute for Sustainable Energy."

Lastly, we recommend the charge in the bill for the board be modified as follows (see additional underlined language):

"analyze energy efficiency opportunities provided pursuant to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 . . . and recommend how to expend money in a strategic way to enhance Connecticut's energy independence and economic and job development opportunities."

The federal stimulus funding provides a unique opportunity to develop well-paying jobs and job training for "green" jobs. This can be an effectiveness strategy to address the current recession and job losses in the state. It is also among the goals of stimulus package.

¹ Shirley Bergert serves: as the residential representative on the Energy Conservation Management Board overseeing the expenditure of ratepayer conservation funds in Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund (Conn. Gen. Stat. § 16-245m); as the low income representative on the Fuel Oil Conservation Board (Conn. Gen. Stat. § 16a-22f); on the Low Income Energy Advisory Board (Conn. Gen. Stat. § 16a-41b); and on the Advisory Board of the Institute for Sustainable Energy at Eastern Connecticut State University.

